

States, good for the people of Russia. And again, I'd like to thank my medical team for making it possible for me to make the trip so soon after my surgery. But it went fine, and it was a remarkable thing, not only the progress we made on NATO but especially on our commitment to slash the nuclear arsenals of both the United States and Russia by 80 percent from their cold war highs, within decades. So I'm very excited about it. It was a good meeting, and I'm glad to be back.

President George Bush's Skydiving

Q. Mr. President, what do you think about your predecessor's venture into skydiving? [Laughter] President Bush is supposed to be parachuting even as we speak. [Laughter]

The President. I am mightily impressed. [Laughter] And I wish him well. I'm excited. I can't wait to see him get down and give us the story. [Laughter]

President's Visit to Mexico

Q. Are you going to have to postpone your Mexico trip because of your injury?

The President. What we have decided to do—and I think we've announced it—we will announce it today—is to postpone the Mexico trip for about a month and put it where I was going to do my full Latin American trip to the other countries, to Central America, to South America, and the Caribbean. And what we're going to do is to make the trip to Mexico, to Costa Rica, and to Barbados, to do Central America and the Caribbean and Mexico during that timeframe. And then later in the year, we're going to go to South America and do that trip, when I'm somewhat more mobile, because, among other things, we're going to Argentina and Brazil. They're big countries. There's going to be a lot of moving around, and I need a little more physical mobility. Besides, I'm hoping to ride horses and do some other things, and I'm not quite ready for that, as you can see.

Medicare Initiative

Q. Mr. President, the cornerstone of the Florida program is the surety bond and the on-site inspections, both of which are missing from your proposal. Why is that?

The President. Do you want to comment on that?

Secretary Donna Shalala. Yes. The on-site inspection is in it. On the surety bond, it's one of the things that we have the authority under our regulatory authority, and we'll have a later announcement on that.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida.

Statement on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

March 25, 1997

In my State of the Union Address, I challenged Congress to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform by July 4th, the date we celebrate the birth of our democracy. The only way that political reform will become law is if citizens raise their voices to demand change. I strongly support the bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators John McCain and Russ Feingold, and Representatives Chris Shays and Marty Meehan. It is real, it is fair, it is tough, and it will curb the role of big money in our politics.

We know the pressing need for reform. The campaign finance laws are two decades out of date and have been overwhelmed by a flood of money that rises with every election. Above all, campaign finance reform will help us to meet our Nation's fundamental challenges. It will help us balance the budget, fight crime, extend health care to our children, protect our young people from the dangers of tobacco. Reform will help make sure that our political system stands for ordinary Americans and helps them in their daily lives.

At Faneuil Hall, the "Cradle of Liberty," and at Independence Hall, our Founders forged our democracy. Now it is up to all of us, in a new time, to renew that democracy and to make sure that our Government represents the national interest, not just narrow interests. I thank those who are fighting for reform and who are gathered at Faneuil Hall for their leadership and urge all citizens to join in this effort. This year can be the year that we finally pass campaign finance reform.

NOTE: This statement was read at the Project Independence rally for campaign finance reform at Faneuil Hall in Boston, MA.

Proclamation 6979—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1997

March 25, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today, the Greek people and the Hellenic Republic will celebrate the 176th anniversary of the beginning of their struggle for independence.

On this day, it is fitting that we reflect on the enormous contributions the Greek people have made to the modern world. The legacy of the ancient Greeks, in the fields of philosophy, literature, drama, sculpture, and architecture, continues to influence our beliefs, our values, and our concept of art. And, after more than 2,000 years, the ideology of Greece—as embodied in the concept of democracy—is still the ideal that guides us in charting our course for the future.

Greek ideology had a profound effect on our Founding Fathers, who molded the American form of government based upon the principles of Greek democracy. Thomas Jefferson studied the Greek classics in his youth and was inspired by their philosophy throughout his life, most dramatically when he crafted the Declaration of Independence. When formulating his vision for this country, Jefferson specifically referred to the integrated assertions, theories, and aims of the classic Greek world.

Our admiration for Greece continues into the modern day, and we salute its commitment to democracy, to peace, and to a united and stable Europe. We share a partnership with Greece in NATO, and our countries are linked forever by close family relationships between our peoples. Our Nation looks forward to working closely with Greece in the coming years as we examine ways to bring full peace, stability, and prosperity to all the nations of Europe and the world.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1997, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:34 a.m., March 26, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 27.

**Executive Order 13040—
Amendment to Executive Order
13017, Advisory Commission on
Consumer Protection and Quality in
the Health Care Industry**

March 25, 1997

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to expand membership and ensure broad-based representation for the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry and to revise the deadlines for the Commission's submission to the President of interim and final reports, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Section 1(a) of Executive Order 13017 is amended by deleting the number "20" in the second sentence and inserting the number "32" in lieu thereof.

Sec. 2. Section 3 of Executive Order 13017 is amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 3. Reports. The Commission shall make a preliminary report to the President by January 31, 1998. A final